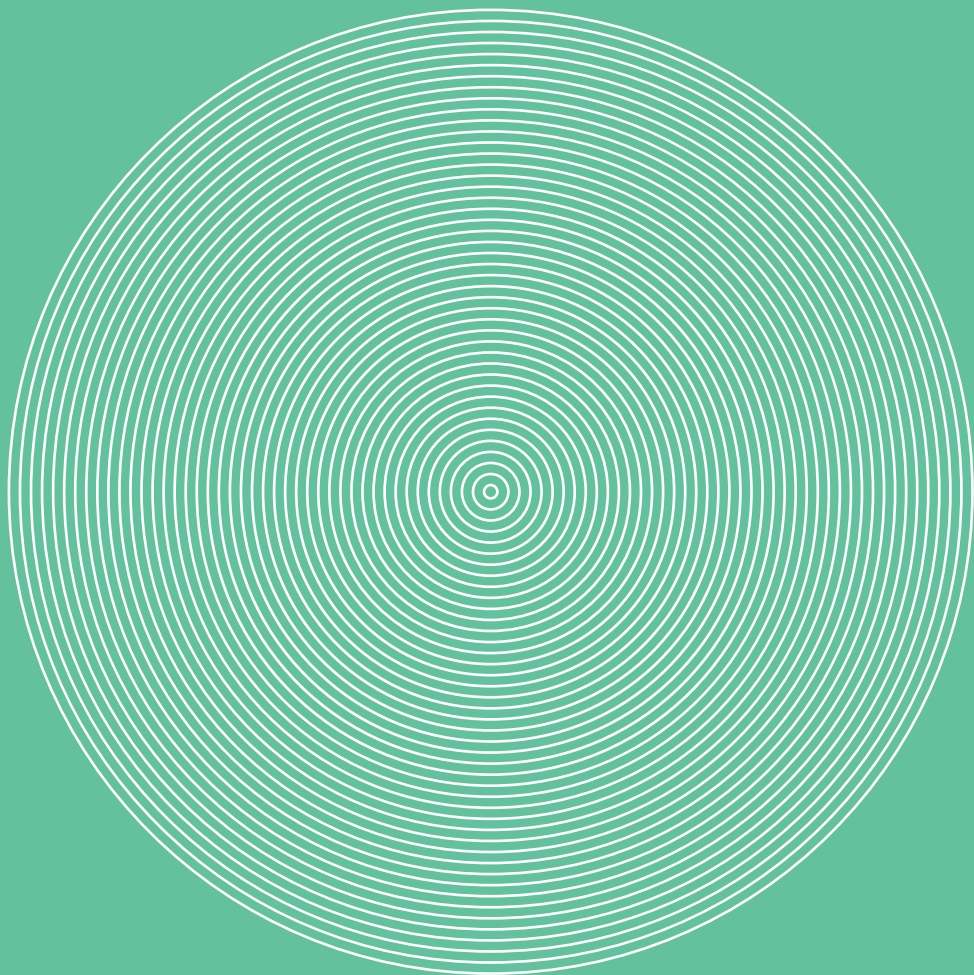


# Preparing for State Design Review



Government  
of South Australia

**OFFICE FOR  
DESIGN+  
ARCHITECTURE SA**



# Contents

The Role of State Design Review	2
Participants in State Design Review	6
Leading up to Design Review	12
Presentation Material	14
Presentation Material - Ten Suggestions	18
What to Expect on the Day	22
The Recommendations Letter	26
Next Steps	28
Additional State Design Review Resources	32

# The Role of State Design Review

## **Pre-lodgement Service**

State Design Review is an integral part of the voluntary, confidential and free pre-lodgement service offered by Planning and Land Use Services, the Department for Trade and Investment (DTI). The pre-lodgement service is a collaborative process in which proponents, assessment authorities and referral agencies work closely to achieve the best possible design, planning and development outcomes.

The pre-lodgement service is available for developments that are located within the area where the 'Design Overlay' applies under the Planning and Design Code.

The pre-lodgement service is also available for selected Crown Projects.

While the pre-lodgement service is available at any stage of a proposal's evolution, the greatest benefit is achieved through early engagement with relevant stakeholders.

## **Statutory Referrals**

Design advice is an important part of the planning approvals process in South Australia. Changes to the planning system in 2012 included the introduction of a statutory referral to the Government Architect for certain development applications assessed by the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP).

State Design Review and the subsequent recommendations letters inform the referral provided to the SCAP by the Government Architect. The SCAP places significant weight on this advice in helping to raise the standard of design in the State.

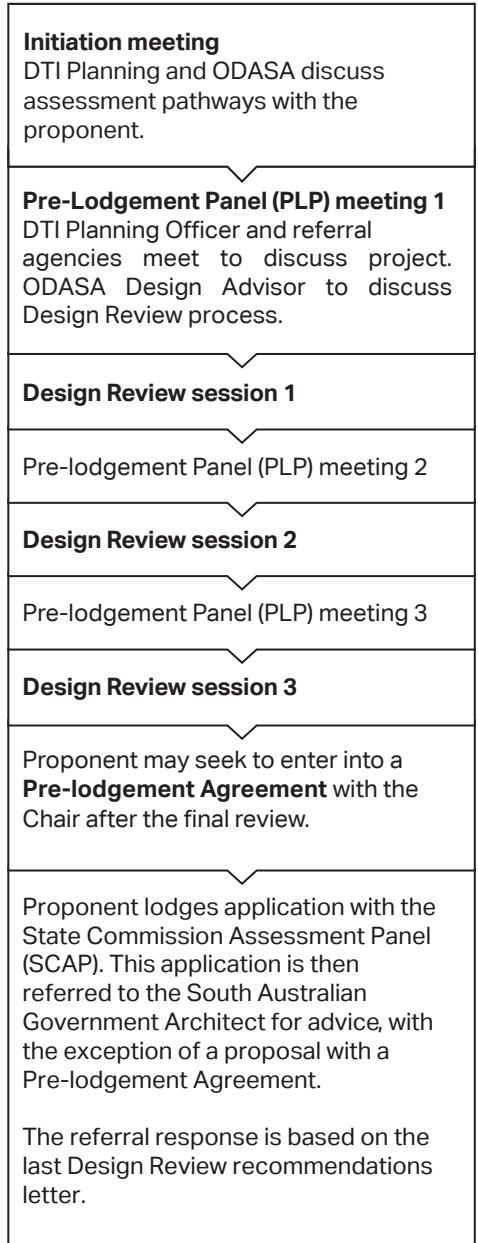
## **Projects of State Significance**

Design Review and guidance is provided to assist the Minister for Planning with projects deemed to be of significance to the State.



## **The Pre-lodgement State Design Review Process**

This chart describes how State Design Review fits within the DTI's pre-lodgement service. The number of Design Review panel sessions is determined by the complexity of the project and may also be determined by its timeline, external constraints or the Chair's initial recommendations letter.



# Participants in State Design Review



## **Proponent Team**

The presenting team should be led by the architect or lead designer and include the proponent. It may also be helpful for other team members to attend if they can contribute to the discussion – for example, landscape architects, heritage consultants, planning consultants or engineers. Typically, no more than six (6) people should represent the team.

## **The Chair**

It is important to have a highly-regarded Chair who can effectively consider a range of views and draw a coherent conclusion from each Design Review session.

The Chair must have:

- A record of professional achievement that supports the delivery of Design Review
- Strong critical and analytical thinking abilities
- Skills to communicate in a respectful manner
- The ability to deal with panel members or clients who express strong or conflicting opinions
- The ability to synthesise and summarise disparate or conflicting views and to summarise the panel discussion in a clear and concise manner.

## **The Panel**

### **Panel Composition**

State Design Review panel members are selected from a pool of built environment experts recruited for their skills, expertise and record of achievement in one or more professional fields. The panel is composed to achieve a balanced representation of skills and experience.

Typically three to four panel members attend each Design Review session.

### **Mix of Skills**

As well as architects, landscape architects and urban designers, Design Review also seeks advice from fields such as heritage, education, sustainability and transport infrastructure.

Reviews that require specific expertise are assigned to panel members with relevant skill sets.

### **Interstate Experience**

Design Review benefits from intimate knowledge of the local context however, experience has shown that the wider perspective afforded by interstate built environment experts is also highly valuable.

### **Diversity**

It is vital that the panel represents a diverse range of views and backgrounds.

### **Terms of Office**

New panel members are appointed every three years to maintain a balance of new and experienced members.

### **Training and Guidance**

Prior to joining a panel, all new members attend induction and training sessions covering procedures and frameworks that support the delivery of State Design Review. Additional training sessions, addressing specific topics, are provided where necessary.



All panel members and professional staff must have an understanding of local planning issues and priorities, commercial viability and government policy.

### **Continuity**

ODASA strives to achieve panel member continuity between each Design Review session, with a minimum of two (2) members retained, for consistency of advice.

To ensure advice is independent, the makeup of panel is not disclosed to the proponent and project team prior to a Design Review session.

### **The ODASA Design Advisor**

The role of the Design Advisor is to assist and facilitate the State Design Review process and be the first ODASA point of contact for proponents and project teams. The Design Advisor attends Pre-lodgement Panel meetings, coordinates and attends Design Review preview meetings, prepares and delivers the panel briefings and coordinates and attends the Design Review sessions.

It is important that proponents and project teams clearly communicate the project brief and background information to their Design Advisor, as this forms part of the Advisor's briefings to the panel.

The Design Advisor is available to answer any questions the proponent or project teams may have in relation to Design Review. However, the principal point of contact for the Pre-lodgement Service is the designated DTI Planning Officer.

### **Other Participants**

Other participants may include:

- Representatives from PLUS, DTI including the Planning Officer
- Representatives of the local council
- Representatives from Heritage SA and other referral agencies
- Observers, as approved by the Chair and subject to the observer confidentiality contract.

### **Special Panels**

Special Panels may be convened to support local authorities or other state agencies with significant projects. The advantage of special panels is the capacity to adjust the State Design Review process to accommodate the specific requirements of a project. Examples of special panels include master planning projects and reviews of project guidelines for Major Projects.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

A conflict of interest arises if there is any suggestion that a panel member, individually or as a member of a group or organisation, might have a financial, commercial, professional or personal interest in a project, its client or its site.

All interests, real or perceived, are formally managed and recorded in advance of each meeting.

In cases where ODASA determine a panel member conflict, the member will not be permitted to participate in any Design Review session relating to that scheme.





# Leading up to Design Review

The steps leading up to the Design Review session include:

**1. Attend a Pre-lodgement Panel meeting, scheduled with the DTI Planning Officer**

In this meeting, the ODASA Design Advisor can answer any questions and schedule Design Review sessions.

**2. Complete and email the Project Information Form to the ODASA Design Advisor**

The Project Information Form is available on the ODASA website. This information informs the briefing document issued to the panel prior to the Design Review session.

**3. Attend a preview meeting with the ODASA Design Advisor**

This informal meeting occurs approximately one week before the Design

Review session. The intent of the meeting is to review draft presentation materials and answer any questions.

**4. Submit three (3) digital images or drawings that capture the project being presented**

These images may include a floor plan, elevations and/or perspective image. Images are to be emailed or provided on a USB, to the Design Advisor approximately one week before the Design Review session. These images form part of the briefing document issued to the panel prior to the Design Review session.

**5. Deliver presentation material to ODASA**

This should occur by midday on the day before the Design Review session. See Presentation Material for detailed requirements.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
-1				Preview meeting and delivery of three (3) digital images	Briefing document issued to panel members (by ODASA)
0			Delivery of presentation materials to ODASA by midday	<b>Design Review</b>	
1					
2				Recommendations letter sent within ten (10) working days	

**Presentation  
Material**

**In-Person  
Sessions**



## **Essential Material**

A productive Design Review session works best with clear and legible presentation drawings. The presentation space is limited to accommodate up to twelve (12) printed A1 sheets, arranged as indicated in the diagrams on this page.

The presentation material should include up to twelve (12) printed A1 sheets depicting the scheme and be accompanied by one (1) A3 unbound printed set and one (1) digital copy. The A3 printed set and digital copy are kept as the official record and are critical in evaluating the design development of schemes at subsequent Design Review sessions.

The Design Review space is arranged to facilitate open discussion and the A1 printed sheets will be displayed in advance of the proponent and project team arriving. If drawings need to be displayed in a particular order to support the presentation, they should be numbered and the Design Advisor should be briefed accordingly.

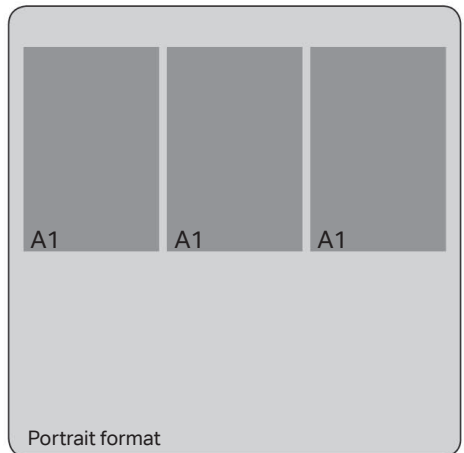
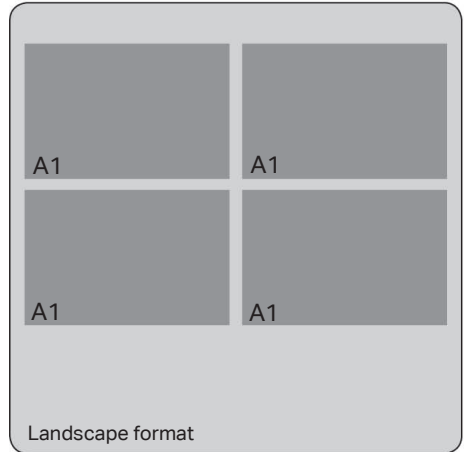
Presentation material can be collected from ODASA the day after the presentation. Uncollected material will be recycled via a confidential document recycling service.

## **Physical Model**

A physical model of the proposal in its context can be useful to assist the design discussion. The model should be at a scale relevant to the proposal and may be a simple massing or working model, to adequately describe the scheme.

## **Delivery of Material**

All presentation material is to be delivered to ODASA by midday on the day before the Design Review session. The Office for Design and Architecture SA is located at Level 1, 28 Leigh St, Adelaide SA 5000.



**Presentation  
Material**

**Remote  
Sessions**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Design Review sessions may be offered in a remote format via Microsoft Teams.

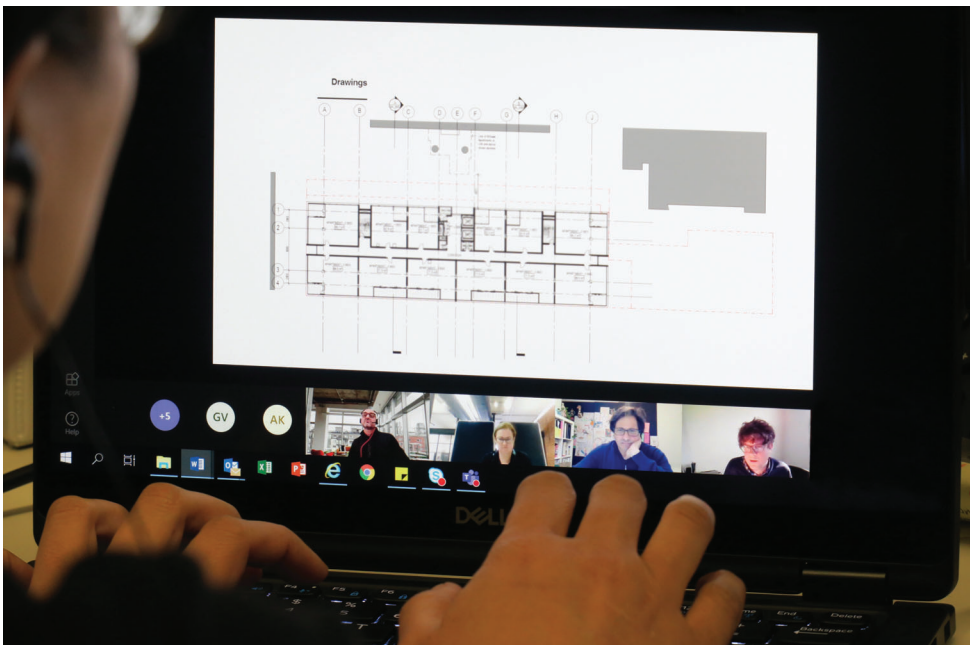
### **Essential Material**

For remote Design Review sessions, the presentation material is required to be in a format that can be viewed on-line via a shared screen, and as such, the presentations are strongly recommended to be in landscape format. Presentation material should include drawings at appropriate scales that are easily legible on computer screens and not exceed 20 pages, reflecting the allocated presentation time for the project team.

Presentation material, briefing notes and site information is made available to the Design Review panel members the day prior to the review session, to ensure panel members are familiar with the proposal and its context at the review.

### **Delivery of Materials**

Digital presentation material is to be issued to the ODASA Design Advisor by midday on the day before the Design Review session.



**Presentation  
Material**

**Ten  
Suggestions**

The first Design Review session is an opportunity to thoroughly brief the Chair and panel on key aspects of the project. In order to get the most out of Design Review, it can be useful to structure the proposal to address the following aspects:

### **1. Context analysis and site plans**

A contextual analysis establishes the immediate development context, identifying and explaining the key influences on the proposed design. It analyses the immediate surroundings and maps potential constraints relating to overlooking, overshadowing, view retention, building bulk, pedestrian and transport networks, streetscape, landscape and policy provisions.

Diagrams of the contextual analysis are critical tools in communicating the design and in reviewing proposals. These diagrams will help the design team demonstrate how the development responds to its context in a creative and considered manner.

Site plans should clearly show where the project is located within the wider precinct or city and the full extent of the site in relation to its immediate surrounds. It is not possible to properly assess the success of a scheme without fully understanding the context in which it sits. The project team must clearly describe this in their presentation panels.

The site plan should give a clear indication of: the site boundary, access to local public transport, the location and extent of surrounding buildings including areas of historic interest or protection, public open space and how people and vehicles move around and within the site. The site plan should also identify land within the proponent's ownership and which parts

of the site are in the public and private realms. Aerial photographs and historic maps can also be useful in illustrating the surrounding context.

### **2. Design iterations**

It is important that the panel clearly understands the decision-making processes involved in fulfilling the project brief and addressing site constraints. They should be able to understand how the design team has tested various ideas and options and how the design solution has evolved.

Design iterations and evidence of testing can be illustrated with diagrams, sketches and models. It is critical that the reasoning behind final design decisions are illustrated across the presentation.

### **3. Form and massing**

A form and massing study should illustrate the building envelope and how the proposal's component parts are arranged. It is useful to see how the proposed building mass fits within the surrounding built form and streetscape.

The extent of any overshadowing on surrounding spaces can also be illustrated through form and massing diagrams or physical models.

### **4. Plans**

Plans should be clear and legible from a distance. Project teams should strive for clarity over quantity of information. Drawings must be sufficiently annotated to describe the purpose of rooms and spaces.

A clear sense of the orientation and scale of a project must be conveyed in the drawings, along with accurate and consistent north points.



For larger schemes, it may be useful to include project staging information.

### **5. Sections**

Sections should show floor heights and overall building heights and be read alongside plans and elevations to give the panel a clear sense of the spatial characteristics and expression of the proposal. Sections should also indicate how various areas of the proposed building are accessed.

Site sections are useful for demonstrating how interface issues are being managed.

### **6. Elevations**

Elevations should illustrate external form and expression as viewed from key neighbouring sites.

Streetscape elevations should show the proposal in its context and give a clear sense of its materiality, mass and proportions.

### **7. Construction**

Construction intent should be clearly demonstrated through typical details that communicate the architectural expression.

Material selections should demonstrate an understanding of the building context, construction method and maintenance requirements.

It is also important to show how the construction method will allow the building to adapt to future requirements.

### **8. Visualisations**

Visualisations of the proposal, either computer generated or hand-rendered, can be powerful tools in describing a development's appearance and how it relates to its surroundings.

Visualisations should convey the key aspects of a proposal and reflect the immediate streetscape and long views. They should include people to give a clear sense of scale and proportion.

Honest, accurate and consistent documentation and visualisations that relate to plans and sections are critical in communicating the design intent to the Chair and panel members.

### **9. Landscape and the public realm**

Projects that are well integrated with their surroundings at ground level positively contribute to neighbourhoods and communities. The project team should demonstrate how the proposal will impact on the public realm, local character and wider community.

Public and private spaces should be clearly defined and circulation patterns and arrival sequences should be legible.

Material information, construction details and sections through the public realm should be included to demonstrate the scale and robustness of these elements.

### **10. Sustainability**

Well-designed buildings are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Presentations should demonstrate consideration of the proposal's life-cycle costs, material efficiencies, natural resource and energy consumption and evidence of stakeholder consultation throughout the design process.

# What to Expect on the Day



## **Date and Location**

Design Review sessions are scheduled on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursdays of each month. In-person Design Review sessions are held at the Office for Design and Architecture SA (ODASA) located at 28 Leigh Street, Adelaide.

## **Design Review Session Structure**

A typical Design Review session is structured as follows:

### **1. Site Visit**

Site visits are organised for the panel members for every new project entering the Design Review process. For remote review sessions, site information is collated by the ODASA Design Advisor and shared with panel members.

### **2. Closed briefing for panel members**

Before the Design Review session begins, the ODASA Design Advisor and DTI Planning Officer brief the panel on significant aspects of the site context, the site, planning and agency advice provided, and identify any key issues of the proposal.

### **3. Welcome**

The Chair welcomes the proponent and project team, local authority representatives and observers into the room. If observers are present, the Chair will reiterate that they are not to contribute to the session, unless invited to do so. If local Council representatives are present, they may be invited to provide brief comments on the policy context.

### **4. Presentation**

The proponent and project team will be invited to present their scheme, including the project brief, aims and objectives, and the main design elements.

### **5. Questions and clarifications**

The Chair will ask for the panel's initial observations and, if required, ask for clarification or further information from the proponent and project team. The project team will be invited to respond. The panel will then resume discussion.

### **6. Panel review and discussion**

In general, the panel discussion is structured around the following themes:

- Site analysis and response to context
- Site organisation
- Built form (height and massing)
- Architectural expression
- Materiality
- Public realm
- Access and inclusivity
- Internal layout and user amenity
- Sustainability

During the first review the panel will seek to identify the major issues, to ensure progressive certainty for the proponent and project team is achieved. Subsequent design changes will be reviewed with reference to the comments made at the previous Design Review session and associated recommendations letter. The Chair will ensure that any fundamental opinions or reservations raised in relation to the scheme are made clear before the proponent and project team leave the room. It is important that the panel's views are expressed openly. If there are any major differences in opinions of panel members, these will be discussed and resolved by the Chair. The Chair will ensure that the presenting team leaves with an accurate understanding of the issues discussed.



### 7. Summary by the Chair

The Chair will summarise the panel's discussion views. This will inform the recommendations letter.

### 8. Opportunity for the proponent and project team to respond

Following the Chair's summary, the proponent and project team will be invited to respond to any issues raised. The session will then conclude and the presenting team will leave the room.

### 9. Closed panel de-briefing

The panel will privately summarise and consolidate their comments which the ODASA Design Advisor will record, confirming and clarifying points if needed, for inclusion in the Chair's recommendations letter. New observations are not introduced during this closed discussion, unless a significant issue emerges.

1. Closed briefing for panel members	15 min
2. Welcome (by Chair)	2 min
3. Presentation (by proponent and project team)	15 min
4. Questions and clarifications (panel to proponent and project team)	5 min
5. Panel discussion	30 min
6. Summary (by Chair)	3 min
7. Opportunity for design team to respond to Review	5 min
8. Closed panel de-briefing	Session closes

# The Recommendations Letter

State Design Review recommendations letters and related correspondence are addressed to the nominated proponent representative and distributed to the DTI Planning Officer. Typically, permission must be sought prior to any further distribution, noting exceptions under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991 and the Public Sector (Data Sharing) Bill 2016*.

The nominated proponent representative will receive the Chair's recommendations within ten (10) working days following the Design Review session.

The recommendations letter is not a minute of the panel discussion, rather it expresses the view of the Chair as informed by the Design Review panel's deliberation.

If a recommendations letter is found to contain an error it may be withdrawn, corrected and re-issued. The document will retain its original date however, will be clearly marked and accompanied by a re-issue explanation.

# Next Steps

## **After Design Review**

A minimum of two (2) to three (3) Design Review sessions are advised to encourage genuine engagement and optimise opportunities for design response to any issues identified.

For project familiarity and the delivery of consistent advice, a minimum of two (2) original panel members will be present at subsequent reviews. The ODASA Design Advisor will brief the panel to ensure previous recommendations are not contradicted.

## **Desktop Review**

Desktop Reviews, if required, deal with additional project details following the resolution of major design issues through Design Review sessions.

Desktop Reviews, typically with two (2) panel members and the Chair, are conducted around a table and run for the same length of time as a Design Review session. The same ODASA Design Advisor will brief the panel members to ensure continuity.

The presentation material should thoroughly describe the scheme, as per Design Review, however, should be reduced to A3 size. Five (5) unbound sets of A3 drawings and one (1) digital copy should be delivered to ODASA by midday on the day before the Desktop Review session.

The proponent has 15 minutes to present the scheme after which, the panel will discuss issues. The Chair will summarise the discussion and the proponent and design team will leave the room. The panel will then consolidate their comments and a recommendations letter will be issued within ten (10) working days.

## **Pre-lodgement Agreements**

Section 123 of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, and regulation 46(2) of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017* allows agreements to be reached between development applicants and referral agencies prior to lodgement. This process eliminates the need for referrals to be undertaken during the formal assessment process, thereby significantly reducing assessment timelines and potential delays for the development application.

The Pre-lodgement Agreement (PLA) letter is addressed to the SCAP and includes advisory notes detailing how the project has progressed through Design Review. The PLA letter clearly outlines whether the proposal is supported by the Chair, or whether there are unresolved design issues that may provide grounds for conditions to be placed on any development approval by SCAP.

A PLA includes the stamped, initialled and dated drawings subject to the agreement and must be lodged with the SCAP Development Application within one (1) year of being signed.







# Additional State Design Review Resources

The following documents provide additional information about State Design Review.

They can be downloaded from the ODASA website [odasa.sa.gov.au](http://odasa.sa.gov.au).

- Principles of Good Design
- State Design Review in South Australia
- Project Information Form
- Checklist for Design Teams
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Presentation Checklist

## **DTI Planning Resources**

### **Pre-lodgement Service**

[plan.sa.gov.au/development\\_applications/case\\_management\\_services/pre-lodgement\\_service](http://plan.sa.gov.au/development_applications/case_management_services/pre-lodgement_service)

### **PlanSA homepage**

[plan.sa.gov.au/](http://plan.sa.gov.au/)

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